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January 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

2 January 1965

*South Vietnam: [General Khanh and other senior Vietnamese military commanders now seem agreed on seeking a compromise with the Huong government on the current political crisis]

[Tripartite discussions looking toward a solution have begun among representatives of Premier Huong, the military, and the US Mission.]

[Khanh has also promoted IV Corps commander Thieu, his chief delegate in the negotiations, to the rank of major general.]

[Little difficulty is anticipated in reaching agreement on a new legislative advisory council to replace the disbanded High National Council, but compromise on other points may be harder to achieve.]

[The two-day meeting of Khanh and his commanders earlier this week is reported to have been attended by acrimonious exchanges, which gave rise to rumors of new coups in Saigon. Although the military appears to have papered over differences within its ranks sufficiently to present a united front in the current talks, discord will probably soon reassert itself, particularly between Khanh and the "young Turks".]

[The series of engagements over the past few days in the Binh Gia area 40 miles east of Saigon has resulted in heavy casualties for both the government and the Viet Cong. On the government side, a marine battalion has been especially hard hit. According to MACV, 110 Viet Cong bodies have been counted, and a much larger number estimated carried away.]

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British Guiana: [Premier Burnham is trying to present himself as a moderate and conciliatory leader, but is unlikely to dispel the suspicion with which the large East Indian community views his government.]

[Burnham recently told the US Consul General in Georgetown that his tactic with former Premier Jagan and the opposition People's Progressive Party (PPP) will be to go out of his way to be correct and considerate]

[Burnham has already said publicly that he plans to arrange for Jagan to receive a salary for his duties as leader of the opposition, and to consult Jagan on "certain national issues." He was also responsible for the release just before Christmas of nine political detainees, five of whom belong to the PPP.]

[Burnham's lenient approach seems only to have irritated the Jaganites. Jagan, who still claims that the election was a fraud, is also playing on racial animosities by warning that Burnham's gestures are hypocritical and offering to help anyone who feels unsafe under a government that is predominantly Negro. The PPP, meanwhile, is picketing Government House in Georgetown for the release of the 15 remaining political detainees.]

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NOTE

*Nigeria: Intensive behind-the-scenes efforts appear to be underway to heal the critical breach which opened between President Azikiwe and federal Prime Minister Balewa on the eve of the controversial 30 December election. *For, Jan* Azikiwe cancelled at the last minute a speech in which he would have again openly aligned himself with the southern-based political coalition against Nigeria's dominant northerners. Although talk about breaking up the federation will probably continue, a period of extended bargaining among major national leaders for a face-saving deal now seems likely, while the present Balewa government continues in a caretaker capacity--as it legally can for some time.

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